

Message Text

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TO USINT CAIRO

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION STATE INFO ALGIERS, JERUSLEM, JIDDA,
KUWAIT, MOSCOW, TEL AVIV, USUN, AMMAN, BAGHDAD, TUNIS, RABAT
AND TRIPOLI FROM BEIRUT OCT 30, REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 12586

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINS JO LE XF
SUBJECT: FEDAYEEN POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN WAKE OF ME CEASE-FIRE

REF: AMMAN 5753 (NOTAL

SUMMARY: MAJOR FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS NOW
APPEAR TO BE SEEKING REGAIN INFLUENCE BY TRYING TO REACH
AGREEMENT ON POLITICAL POSITION PALESTINIANS SHOULD
ADOPT IN CONTEXT ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE FEGOTIATIONS.
LEADING IDEA SEEMS TO BE THAT OF CREATING INDEPENDENT
PALESTINIAN STATE ON WEST BANK/GAZA, WHICH IS
FIRST TIME FEDAYEEN LEADERS SEEM TO HAVE ACCEPTED
REALITY THAT THEIR ONLY HOPE IS IN A SETTLEMENT BASED ON
RES 242. DESPITE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS POSED BY INDEPENDENT
STATE CONCEPT, IT REPRESENTS PROPOSITION WHICH WILL RE-

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QUIRE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION DURING COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS.

END SUMMARY.

1. ONE SIGNIFICANT RESULT OF OCT 6-22 WAR HAS BEEN DECREASE IN PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE OF FEDAYEEN AND GREATER "REALISM" AMONG THEIR LEADERS ABOUT PALESTINIAN GOALS. PALESTINIANS APPEAR TO RECOGNIZE THEIR WEAKNESS IN COMPARISON ARAB GOVT AND ARMIES WHICH TOOK SUCH FIRM POSITIONS DURING RECENT FIGHTING, INCLUDING THOSE GULF STATES WHICH HAVE APPLIED OIL EMBARGO. FAILURE OF FEDAYEEN TO MAKE SERIOUS MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO ARAB CAUSE, BLATANTLY FALSE FEDAYEEN PROPAGANDA, AND VIRTUAL INACTION BY 1.3 MILLION PALESTINIANS LIVING IN ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES HAVE BADLY DAMAGED FEDAYEEN PRESTIGE. FEDAYEEN RELUCTANCE INCUR WRATH OF ARAB REGIMES IS, WE BELIEVE, PRIMARY REASON FOR ABSENCE TO DATE OF MAJOR FEDAYEEN EFFORTS DISRUPT CEASE-FIRE BY CROSS-BORDER AND OTHER TERRORIST OPERATIONS.

2. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF OBVIOUS MILITARY WEAKNESS, FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP SEEMS BE SCRAMBLING FOR SOME POLITICAL MEANS REGAIN INFLUENCE WITH ARAB GOVT AND IMAGE OF LEADERSHIP FOR PALESTINIANS GENERALLY. FEDAYEEN APPARENTLY INTEND PLAY DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT PART IN ANY ARAB NEGOTIATIONS. FOR SETTLEMENT ME CONFLICT. THEY COUNTING HEAVILY UPON FACT THAT ARAB GOVT HAVE CONDITIONED THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF CEASE-FIRE, NEGOTIATIONS AND REMOVAL OF OIL EMBARGO, INTER ALIA, ON SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF "RIGHTS" OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. ARAB GOVT SEEM GENUINELY PERSUADED HAT UNLESS THIS FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM RESOLVED THERE WILL BE NO POSSIBILITY LONG-TERM PEACE IN AREA. FEDAYEEN HOPE TO PRESENT SELVES AS ONLY POSSIBLE SPOKESMEN FOR PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

3. IDEA APPARENTLY BEING MOST ACTIVELY CONSIDERED IN SPATE OF MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS AMONG PLO LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENTIAL PALESTINIAN INTELLECTUALS AND BUSINESSMEN HERE IS ENDORESEMENT OF CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENT WEST BANK/ GAZA PALESTINIAN STATE ALONG LINES ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY EGYPTIAN FONMIN IN UNSC JUNE 6. THERE ARE OTHER IDEAS UNDER CONSIDERATION BUT THIS ONE SEEMS HAVE INSTANT POLITICAL APPEAL IN ARAB CIRCLES (OF ALL MAJOR ARAB GOVT, ONLY IRAQ

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AND LIBYA ARE LIKELY TO OPPOSE IT OUTRIGHT). WE HAVE REPORTS THAT USSR EMBASSY AND ALGERIANS HERE ARE ACTIVELY SUPPORTING IT.

4. MERE FACT THAT MAJOR FEDAYEEN LEADERS ARE TALKING IN RELATIVELY MODERATE TERMS ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN NEGOTIATIONS, INSTEAD OF RESORTING TO EXTREME VIOLENCE TO TRY AND BLOCK POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT ALONG LINES SC RES 242, MUST BE RELIEF

TO MANY ARAB GOVTs. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT IDEA IS ACCEPTABLE TO MOST MEMBERS PLO/EX COMMAND THAT FURTHER MEETINGS OF EX COMM LIKELY TO BE FOLLOWED BY SESSION OF PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL (PNC), FOR PURPOSE OF DEFINING COMMON PALESTINIAN POSITION.

DECISIVE VOICE IN ULTIMATE DECISION LIKELY BE THAT OF 'ARAFAT WHO, DESPITE MANY SHORTCOMINGS AND OPPONENTS, HAS MUCH BIGGER FOLLOWING AMONG PALESTINIANS OUTSIDE JORDAN AND ISRAEL THAN ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL.

5. EVEN SHOULD IDEA OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATES BE ADOPTED BY PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND GAIN SUPPORT OF SOME KEY ARAB GOVTs, IMMENSE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES WOULD REMAIN, SUCH AS LIKELIHOOD OF STRONG OPPOSITION FROM ISRAEL AND JORDANIAN GOVTs. AMONG OTHER PROBLEMS WOULD BE COMPOSITION OF GOVT FOR ENVISAGED NEW STATE, DIFFICULTY STEMMING FROM INTRA-FEDAYEEN RIVALRIES WHICH BLOCKED PAST EFFORTS CREATE PALESTINIAN GOVT IN EXILE AS WELL AS WEAK SUPPORT FOR PLO WITHIN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS INTERESTING THAT MOST FEDAYEEN LEADERS ARE TALKING OPENLY FOR FIRST TIME ABOUT PALESTINIAN ENTITY LOCATED OUTSIDE ISRAEL'S PRE-JUNE 1967 BOUNDARIES. MOREOVER, THERE IS APPARENT ACCEPTANCE BY FEDAYEEN AND ARAB GOVTs THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT TAKE BACK, AT MOST, MORE THAN TINY NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. PALESTINIANS HERE APPEAR BE GIVING LITTLE CONSIDERATION TO TRADITIONAL ISSUES OF REFUGEE RIGHTS TO RETURN AND/OR RECEIVED COMPENSATION.

6. CONCERNING PARA 2 REFTEL, WE BELIEVE REPORT OF PENDING CONFRONTATION BETWEE GOL AND FEDAYEEN IS INCORRECT. ALL EVIDENCE POINTS TO DETERMINATION BY MAIN FEDAYEEN GROUPS NOT RPT NOT TO ROCK BOAT WITH GOL OR OTHER ARAB GOVTs BY PROVOKING ARMED VIOLENCE DURING PERIOD WHEN SERIOUS PLAN-

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NING OF FUTURE POLITICAL STRATEGY IS ORDER OF DAY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT SOME OF SMALLER, MORE EXTREME FEDAYEEN GROUPS MIGHT NOT RESORT TO VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, SO LONG AS ATTITUDES OF MAJOR FEDAYEEN GROUPS AND ARAB GOVTs REMAIN WHAT THEY ARE TODAY (BEIRUT 12488), WE BELIEVE ACTIONS OF SMALL GROUPS INLEBANON CAN BE CONTROLLED WITHOUT MAJOR GOL-FEDAYEEN CONFRONTATION. SHOULD FEDAYEEN POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS BE BADLY DISAPPOINTED BY ARAB GOVTs, OR SHOULD NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL APPEAR HEADED FOR IMPASSE, WE WOULD EXPECT FEDAYEEN TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER REVERSION TO EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE, INCLUDING POSSIBLE TERRORISM AGAINST ARAB GOVTs AS WELL AS AMERICAN INTERESTS AND ISRAEL. BUFFUM

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